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Superior high school students (975 finalists in the NCTE Achievement Awards Program) were surveyed to find what one book was most significant to each of them in their high school experiences, and the reason for the significance. In response to questionnaires, the students cited 416 different titles, 72% of which were novels. The top 10 books were "Catcher in the Rye," "Exodus," "Ugly American," "Crime and Punishment," "Look Homeward Angel," "Of Human Bondage," "Atlas Shrugged," "Gone With the Wind," "Prophet," and "Cry, the Beloved Country." The two most frequent reasons for citing a particular book were that the content was instrumental in shaping the reader's attitudes, values, or thoughts, and that the literary quality of the work attracted the reader. An implication of this survey is that teachers should help students develop a lifetime interest in reading by directing them toward books, such as those in the above list, which have been proved to have a direct impact on the adolescent mind. (LH)

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Significant Reading Experiences of Superior English Students

BY ROBERT S. WHITMAN

Several years ago during a discussion which followed the reading of a book by a student of mine, a curious thing happened. The student, a bright and usually happy junior girl, burst into tears while the two of us were discussing the book. Needless to say, I was quite surprised. After talking with the girl for a while, I discovered that her tears were caused neither by illness, nor an argument at home, nor even a quarrel with her boyfriend. Rather, it was the book we were discussing, *The Grapes of Wrath*, that caused it.

This national study was based upon research and analysis of the reading habits of finalists in the Achievement Awards Program of the National Council of Teachers of English. This work by Mr. Whitman, director of the program, was completed under the direction of J. Harlan Shores at the University of Illinois.

The Illinois Association is grateful to the National Council for sponsoring the Achievement Awards Program. The finalists have consistently been among the best students of high school English in the country. Their responses are authentic and might well serve as a guide and challenge to all of our students. For this reason we welcome the opportunity to publish this study. In fact, we regard the list of books referred to by Achievement Award contestants, and listed at the conclusion of this Bulletin, as so valuable that it is our intent to publish it in separate pamphlet form which will be available to all students for a nominal fee. We should appreciate your response to this proposal.

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We do not expect that every student who reads a book, or even every student who reads *The Grapes of Wrath*, will be as overcome with compassion as this girl. Yet, those of us who serve as the guardians of reading in the schools have faith that many of our students will be touched by the wonder of a different age, by the doubt of a new idea, by the beauty of a well-written line, by any one of the manifold ways that a book has of revealing truth and beauty to the reader. Books can and should play a vital part in the lives of young people.

Purpose and Procedure

In an attempt to determine the impact of books on some recently graduated and very superior high school students, questionnaires were mailed in early September of 1960, 1961, and 1962 to the finalists in the National Council of Teachers of English Achievement Awards Program. These students had been judged superior in English by highly qualified high school and college English teachers. The almost 2,600 students polled were distributed on the basis of population among the fifty states. The main purpose of the questionnaire sent to the finalists was to determine the effectiveness of the Awards program. In addition to questions of that nature, the following two questions on the impact of reading were asked:

1. While you were in high school, did you read one book which was more significant to you than any other one? If so, please give the title.
2. If you would, briefly tell why you found this book significant.

Nine hundred and seventy-five students, or about thirty-seven percent of those solicited, returned questionnaires with usable replies to these questions.

The titles of all the books named were tabulated according to type and number of times named. Next, the reasons given for the books being termed significant were examined. As a first step in classifying the reasons, about three hundred papers were read to determine the categories into which the answers might fall. These categories were then used in categorizing approximately three hundred additional papers. When these later categories had been reviewed and subsequently revised, all of the 975 papers were read and evaluated.

The first thing to take into consideration when reviewing the results of this study is that the students are a highly selective group. This is true, for students entering the Achievement Awards Program are the finest junior English students in their respective schools. Those selected as finalists represent the best of each state. Therefore, generalizations made from this study must take the selectivity of the population into consideration. Readers of this study must also realize that despite the fact that questionnaires were sent out to all states in proportion to their population, there is no proof that the returns from each state were in the same proportion. Also, in considering the books that the students found significant, it is well to keep in mind two things: (1) The questionnaire was sent to students who were cited as top English students by the organization sending the questionnaire, an English teachers' association. This very fact might have induced the student to name a book of literary worth as the one he found most significant instead of, let us say, a science book which had made much more of an impact on him. (2) In the questionnaire the word *book* was used. This word could have caused the students to discount any reading selection other than a book, *e.g.*, a poem, a play, a story, an essay, an article.

Books Cited as Significant

The 975 students submitted a total of 1049 responses to the question asking them to name a book that had been more significant to them than any other. A total of 416 different titles was cited by the students. (For a study of this nature, the naming of approximately four new titles for every ten cited is noteworthy.) Obviously, a great variety of books is significant to superior English students.

Most of the books named, however, are novels. Over 72% of the total responses listed, 762 in all, are novels. Non-fiction nets 22.5% of the total with 236 responses. Poetry has only 33 responses and drama 18. Of the 416 titles named, 232, or almost 56% of them, are novels. Non-fiction boasts 153 different titles, or almost 37% of the total number. Poetry and drama have 16 and 13 each, respectively.

Forty books, or not quite 10% of the total number of titles, are listed five times or more. These 40 books, however, constitute 53% of all responses.

Top Forty Books Listed by Frequency

- | | |
|---|--|
| CATCHER IN THE RYE, THE,
Salinger (39) | WALDEN, Thoreau (13) |
| EXODUS, Uris (30) | LORD OF THE FLIES,
Golding (10) |
| UGLY AMERICAN, THE,
Burdick and Lederer (28) | GRAPES OF WRATH, THE,
Steinbeck (9) |
| CRIME AND PUNISHMENT,
Dostoevski (27) | ANIMAL FARM, Orwell (8) |
| LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL,
Wolfe (27) | LES MISÉRABLES, Hugo (8) |
| OF HUMAN BONDAGE,
Maugham (27) | PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST,
A, Joyce (8) |
| ATLAS SHRUGGED, Rand (21) | FRANNY AND ZOOEY,
Salinger (7) |
| GONE WITH THE WIND,
Mitchell (21) | JANE EYRE, Bronte, C. (7) |
| PROPHET, THE, Gibran (21) | PRIDE AND PREJUDICE,
Austen (7) |
| CRY, THE BELOVED
COUNTRY, Paton (20) | TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD,
Lee (7) |
| BROTHERS KARAMAZOV,
THE, Dostoevski (19) | WAR AND PEACE, Tolstoy (7) |
| ADVISE AND CONSENT,
Drury (18) | ANNA KARENINA, Tolstoy (6) |
| MOBY DICK, Melville (18) | BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY,
THE, Wilder (6) |
| BRAVE NEW WORLD,
Huxley (17) | FORSYTE SAGA, THE,
Galsworthy (6) |
| BIBLE, THE (16) | PILGRIM'S PROGRESS,
Bunyan (6) |
| 1984, Orwell (14) | RAZOR'S EDGE, THE,
Maugham (6) |
| DR. ZHIVAGO, Pasternak (13) | YOU CAN'T GO HOME
AGAIN, Wolfe (6) |
| FOUNTAINHEAD, THE,
Rand (13) | MAGIC MOUNTAIN, THE,
Mann (5) |
| RETURN OF THE NATIVE,
THE, Hardy (13) | OLD MAN AND THE SEA,
THE, Hemingway (5) |
| TALE OF TWO CITIES, A,
Dickens (13) | WIND, SAND AND STARS,
Saint-Exupery (5) |

Certain books were consistently listed as significant by the students. The 10 most often named titles, which make up only 2.4% of the total number of titles, received almost one quarter (24.8%) of the total number of responses. *The Catcher in the Rye*, the most named title with 39 responses, received 3.7% of the total responses.

Among these top forty books, novels again lead both in total titles and total responses. Thirty-three of the books listed are novels, two are allegories (*Pilgrim's Progress* and *Animal Farm*), one is a book of two stories (*Franny and Zooey*), and the other four are miscellaneous non-fiction.

An interesting sidelight on the 33 novels mentioned concerns the periods of their publication. The first three novels plus six others from this list have been published since 1950. This group accounts for 171 of the 481 responses (35%) received by novels in this group of the first 40 books. Although time will tell whether these novels will continue to be read, several of them have received a great amount of popular and critical acclaim and may rightly be called modern classics. The period from 1910 to 1950 has the most titles, 14, and the most responses, 186 (38%). With the possible exception of about three of these books, they are looked upon as modern classics. The books from the period before 1910 are all recognized as classics. Eleven titles and 131 responses (27%) are listed from this period.

The novels from the top forty books that the students found significant seem to be rather evenly distributed among contemporary, modern classic, and classic. Of the eight books not listed as novels, three of them are decidedly classics, *The Bible*, *Walden*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*. *Animal Farm*; *Wind, Sand and Stars*; and *The Prophet* are generally looked upon as modern classics. Only Salinger's two stories *Franny and Zooey* may be considered in the contemporary or transitional category. A look at the top forty books, indeed a look at the entire list of books, indicates that these students were impressed by those books which are generally considered to be of rather high quality.

Also interesting is the fact that quite a few of the top forty books are ones whose use by adolescents has been objected to by various individuals and groups throughout the country. In fact, a report by Lee Burrell, Jr., shows that seventeen of the books from the top forty list were controversial in Wisconsin during the period from 1961 to 1963.¹ The book most often

¹"The Pressure of Censorship in Wisconsin Public Schools," *The Wisconsin English Journal*, 6 (October 1963), pp. 6-28.

named by the students as being significant to them, *The Catcher in the Rye*, is probably the one most often objected to. *The Ugly American*, *Brave New World*, and *1984*, three other books often involved in censorship controversies, are also ranked high by these superior students. Although these books offend some people, they evidently have something important to say to this group of adolescent readers.

As any other study that lists the titles of books, this one is very much circumscribed by time, at least insofar as contemporary books are concerned. A number of the books cited by the students will not be of great interest to readers, let us say, ten years from now. Therefore, of greater worth is an approach which inquires into the nature of the books which the students found significant.

Reasons for Significance of Books

Children are taught to read not as an end in itself, but in order that they may use this skill to enrich their lives. The book, therefore, is a tool, a tool which can contribute to the wealth of an individual. As tools, books serve not only to meet the basic needs of young people—knowledge, self-insight—but also to develop their capacity for creative thinking, understanding, and aesthetic appreciation. The books chosen by the students in this study were significant to them for a variety of reasons.

Shaping of Attitudes, Values, or Thoughts

The principal reason cited for a book's significance was that *the content, usually the ideas or philosophy expressed, was instrumental in shaping the reader's attitudes, values, or thoughts*. This reason was given by over forty-six percent of the students which in itself included many ramifications. For instance, one student who listed Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* as significant did so because it caused him to reevaluate and clarify his ideas while adding new ones to reflect on:

It is not that I agreed with this book, but that, for the first time, I read something which was in basic disagreement with the ideals and philosophy I had been taught to value. This book made me question and defend my values, and even change them.

In another case, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis was instrumental in shaping the reader's attitude:

This book was especially significant to me because from it or through it I learned better to unite intellect and spirit so that I became a more nearly whole being.

Other students found books significant because they gave them an entirely new perspective on life or, as in the instance of the student who named G. K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*, because a book reaffirmed his faith in some previously held conviction. One pupil sharpened his awareness of a problem in our society through reading *The Ugly American*:

I found this book significant not because it is a great literary work or written in a particularly good style, but because it opened my eyes to the situation of U. S. representation in other lands.

Sometimes books were described as significant because the ideas caused the reader to probe deeply into himself, as in the case of this student who read Dostoevski's *The Underground* and found that it stirred him, even though he did not enjoy it:

I found this book significant because confessions in it were so candid, vivid, and terrible that they forced self-analysis upon the reader. The self-analysis was unpleasant and I did not enjoy the book.

Among this group of superior English students, it may be seen that reading is extremely important in the acquisition of ideas of others and the stimulation of their own. These young people are in the process of developing an understanding of themselves, of undertaking social responsibility, and of forming a philosophy of life; and books aid them in becoming more mature readers.

Self-identification

Over five percent of the students selected a book as significant because *the characterization led the reader to identify with a person in the book*. Teachers have realized for a long time the need for young people to assure themselves of their own normality, to realize that their problems are not unique. John DeBoer in writing of this need states:

No problem is so interesting to an adolescent as his own problems. If he can find ways of projecting them to a fictional prototype, he will have the additional satisfaction of dealing with them with an objectivity and clarity impossible in the context of his own personal situation. For many youth, the key to the world of books is the opportunity to find companionship and a sense of comradeship with others who must grapple with obstacles and perplexities comparable to their own.³

Again and again, the students identified with a character in a book:

I found I was able to see myself and some of my problems in the character and difficulties of the main character of the book. After a

³ "Literature and Human Behavior," *The English Journal*, 39 (February, 1950), p. 81.

few pages I found that I was not merely reading the book, I was also living it. (*The Catcher in the Rye*)

I read it at a period of my life when Eugene's struggles were, to some extent, mine, and the whole period was one of intellectual awakening. (*Look Homeward, Angel*)

This particular work helped me analyze and cope with the trials I was experiencing as I became aware of the shortcomings of my local environment. (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*)

Insight and Understanding of Others

Also important to young people is their understanding of other people. Students in more than four percent of the cases found books significant because *one or several of the characters in the book helped the reader to gain insight into and understanding about other people*. In one sense, this category is related to the previous one: learning about other people gives one greater understanding of himself. The student who is sensitive to the capabilities, needs, and ideals of others comes also to understand his own more fully. A student selected *Exodus* as significant for this reason:

It gave me a vivid insight as to how much people can endure when they are suffering for a cause in which they believe.

Another student selected *Of Human Bondage*:

It broadened my understanding of people's personalities, emotions, and motivations.

Some students, however, relished the differences among men, as well as the similarities, and in the process of analysis these students gained a new acquaintance:

I felt that I knew Holden Caulfield. He was rather weird, very depressed, but so strikingly human. I found myself balancing on that thin line twixt laughter and tears and often falling either to the left or right of it. (*The Catcher in the Rye*)

New Situation

As well as their introduction to new people, new places and different times hold fascination for the reader. Well over six percent of the students in this study found a book significant to them because *it introduced the reader to people and life in a situation new to him*. C. C. Fries lists this as one of the eight ways in which a reader may experience a literary selection:

He may gain from the reading a keen sense of the attitudes and outlook of the times or of the society in which the story is laid. *Kim* may yield a sense of the busy throngs and the intrigues of India;

Main Street, an experience of society in the small town; *Kenilworth*, the feel of the England of Shakespeare.⁸

Curiosity may lead a student to read many books, but understanding makes these books significant. Books such as *Crime and Punishment* and *Dr. Zhivago* gave this understanding of Russia:

Crime and Punishment is significant to me because of the new understanding of Russian people and culture that I received when I first read Dostoevski's book.

Pasternak's presentation of life in Russia during the early part of this century helped me to understand better the life of the average Russian today and the conditions in that country at this time.

And a book such as *The Grapes of Wrath* gave an understanding of a period from our own past:

This book presented me with a stinging, hurting picture of a time which had previously been presented to me as difficult but bearable. The easily dismissed economic troubles become real human feelings. The book captures human feelings amidst disaster, human good against human malice.

Literary Quality

In almost twenty-one percent of the cases, books were significant to students because *the literary quality of the book attracted the reader*. Sometimes this attraction was an admiration for the craftsmanship of the writer:

First, I found that the delicate balance of Wilder's phrases and the precision of his word choices combined to make a consummate piece of prose. . . . (*The Bridge of San Luis Rey*)

More often, however, it was a combination of admiration and delight, such as this student expressed about *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

I saw the power of words in portraying situations and emotions and I saw how words could be shaped into beautiful forms. It was an introduction, for me, to the art of language.

For some this attraction to style resulted in a most satisfying aesthetic experience, an experience such as encountered by this student who read *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* by Kazantzakis:

The *Sequel* can be reread a hundred times, and one will not tire of it. As it is read, its pages turn to pictures, its words to wings, its metaphors to music, and the tree of dream will once again blossom in the human heart that beholds the endless vision of Odysseus' voyaging forever under the suns that never set.

⁸ *Teaching of English*, Ann Arbor: George Wahr, 1949, p. 229.

Young people have as great a need for aesthetic experience as they do for an intellectual or practical one. A delight in beauty, even though not so tangible, is as basic as any of the concerns mentioned. Great literary works of art—poetry and prose alike—can make a lasting impression on the young person and make his life richer.

New Reading Experience

About five percent of the students remarked that their book was significant because *it introduced the reader to a new type of reading experience*. One student upon selecting Jean Paul Sartre's *Nausea* commented:

It symbolized for me many new and challenging ideas that I had encountered. It weaned me from satisfaction in trivial reading which had formed the greater part of my reading.

A student who selected *Crime and Punishment* stated that it was the first classic that he had read and it showed him the "fulfilling experience one can gain from reading such literature." Another student commenting on that same novel said that it was the first classic that he had found interesting. He continued by saying that it gave him a "new attitude toward the classic." A third student reacting to *Crime and Punishment* said: "It opened up a whole new world of Eastern European literature to me."

The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas provided a student with a new reading experience quite different from those of the four students just mentioned:

The poems made me find new worlds of sounds and meanings, processions of rhythms and textures in words, a kind of intense freedom of living and feeling and thinking, and a beginning to better decisions and taste in word constructions, their meanings and beings.

This student obviously had his first great aesthetic experience with a piece of literature.

Gateway to Other Activities

About two percent of the students stated their book was significant because *it led the reader to other activities, interests, and readings*. The following student was led to many new interests as a result of reading *Cell 2455, Death Row*:

I read this book during ninth grade, as a climax to a two-year passion for stories about crimes, detectives, and especially the legal system. I think it formed the bridge towards deeper and more literary and

philosophical reading by leading me to realize something I had only suspected—my disagreement with many of society's basic values. This realization led me to seek new changes and unusual ideas in my readings of philosophy, political science, psychology, novels, and poetry.

Several students indicated that their books influenced them in their choice of occupations. One girl said that her book choice caused her to begin going to church. Several students were led to begin writing as a result of some book they had read. Observe what the reading of Goethe's poetry did to this student!

These poems introduced me to the German culture in music (Beethoven and Wagner) and in philosophy (Kant and Spinoza) and to other writers like Mann and Schiller. I appreciated how the Greek-Roman culture could be infused into ours. I began studying German and so learned the value of reading works in the original tongues.

Information

Much of the reading people do is for information. How-to-do-it books and newspapers and news magazines are all widely read. Pupils in schools do most of their reading for information. Such reading, however, is seldom of great significance. Only about two percent of the books were chosen because *they were a source of useful information*. One student selected a recent critical book on the novel for its information:

This study helped me place into the correct perspective all the novels and studies that I had previously read. It is virtually a complete study of the contemporary American fictional "hero-victim-rebel." (*Radical Innocence: The Contemporary American Novel*)

Miscellaneous

About six percent of *the books were selected as significant for miscellaneous reasons*. A number of students mentioned that certain books were important to them because they influenced their writing. Here is the statement of a student who selected *Walden* for several reasons:

The book crystallized certain ideas which were forming in my own mind, stimulated further thinking and reading about how I should spend my life, and gave (and still does give) me many hours of recreation.

Certainly selecting a book because it is enjoyed is a valid reason. Here are additional miscellaneous reasons:

I am an incurable romantic. (*The Count of Monte Cristo*)

I found *The Human Comedy* full of the joys and trouble of everyday life, full of excitement and humor and pathos. I liked it because it made me feel glad I was alive.

It moved me so deeply. (*The Miracle of the Bells*)

I think it exposed women for what they are. (*The Return of the Native*)

Books which have a great personal significance to the reader do not necessarily fit into neat categories. The almost eighty responses tabulated in the miscellaneous grouping cover an exceedingly great number of individual categories. The brief response written by the student who named *Exodus* as significant illustrates how personal and unique some of the responses are: "My family lived through it."

Summary

The superior students who were polled indicated that the books were significant to them mainly because the content was instrumental in shaping their attitudes, values, or thoughts. The literary quality attracted them, also. These two categories included almost two-thirds of the responses. The remaining one-third is distributed over seven categories, including the miscellany. Although the two reasons mentioned encompass the bulk of responses, the range of reasons is great.

Among a less capable group of students, we should certainly see a different distribution of reasons. For instance, we could expect less excitement about the philosophic shaping of attitudes, values, and thoughts, less interest in literary quality. Self-identification would probably gain more importance. In view of the need to know more about the impact of reading on young people, more research should be conducted in this critical area.

Reasons Given for Significance of Books

(In the following list, the percentages listed indicate frequency of comment)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| 46.42 | I. | The content of the book, usually the ideas or philosophy expressed, was instrumental in shaping the reader's attitudes, values, or thoughts. |
| 5.22 | II. | The characterization led the reader to identify with a person in the book. |
| 4.28 | III. | One or several of the characters in the book helped the reader to gain insight into and understanding about other people. |
| 6.62 | IV. | The book introduced the reader to people and life in a situation new to him. |
| 20.75 | V. | The literary quality of the book attracted the reader. |
| 5.13 | VI. | The book introduced the reader to a new type of reading experience. |
| 2.10 | VII. | The book led the reader to other activities, interests and readings. |
| 2.10 | VIII. | The book was a source of useful information. |

- 6.38 IX. The book was significant to the reader for miscellaneous reasons.

Analysis of Ten Most Cited Books

(Please refer to table above for corresponding Roman numerals)

Reasons for Significance of Books	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	A	B
Catcher in the Rye	10	16	7	0	5	0	0	0	3	39	41
Exodus	10	0	2	0	3	1	2	0	4	30	31
Ugly American	22	0	0	0	0	3	0	4	1	28	30
Crime and Punishment	6	1	4	2	9	4	1	0	2	27	29
Look Homeward, Angel	4	12	1	0	6	1	0	0	4	27	28
Of Human Bondage	7	8	7	0	4	0	0	0	1	27	27
Atlas Shrugged	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	21	21
Gone with the Wind	5	0	1	11	4	0	0	0	0	21	21
Prophet	12	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	21	21
Cry, the Beloved Country	10	0	1	3	7	1	2	0	0	20	24

A = total number of times books were named.

B = total number of reasons for books being named as significant.

Ten Most Cited Books

An analysis of the ten most cited books shows the various emphases that books may receive. For instance, *The Catcher in the Rye* is significant to students primarily because of self-identification. Some readers also feel it is instrumental in shaping their attitudes, values, or thoughts. In addition, this novel is regarded as important because its characterization helps the reader to gain insight into and understanding of other people. Its literary qualities excite the reader.

Two other novels are significant to readers principally because of self-identification: *Look Homeward, Angel* and *Of Human Bondage*. The latter also is significant to a number of readers because of its characterization and personal insights.

Exodus and *Gone with the Wind* appeal for the most part to readers because of their introduction to people and life in a situation new to them. *The Ugly American* and *Atlas Shrugged* both are significant largely because of the content being instrumental in shaping the reader's attitudes and values. A finer breakdown

of the responses for that category indicates that most of the responses for the former novel are specifically concerned with social awareness. *Exodus* and *Cry, the Beloved Country* also have six and five responses, respectively, concerned with social awareness.

Crime and Punishment receives its greatest number of responses because of the literary quality of the book. This is also true of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Both of these novels, but especially *Crime and Punishment*, are significant for many reasons.

Implications for Teaching

One of the principal goals of the teacher of English is to help students to develop a lifetime interest in reading, and especially in the reading of literature. In selecting materials for our students, we often lose sight of this goal. Indeed, we use our adult standards as the basis for the selection of material for adolescents, often totally neglecting their point of view. The literature which we select for the adolescent should have a "direct impact" upon his mind. "Otherwise," Louise Rosenblatt states, "we are going through empty motions."⁴ Anthony Tovatt explains why we would be going through "empty motions," when he states that "literature must always be meaningful for the student in the present if it is to be meaningful for him in the future."⁵

Our first responsibility then is to discover meaningful reading for our students. As a start, teachers of superior students might compile a suggested reading list from the list of books at the end of this *Bulletin*, using the top forty titles as a basis, and with the expectation that students might find something of significance in the books from this list.

Teachers can also employ the design of this study in the classroom. The reasons for significance given by students could serve as a basis for a chart listing the various ways students react to books. This chart could be used in a number of ways by the teacher to study objectively the impact of certain selections on the student. After reading a selection, the student could check the items on the chart that make it significant to him. Perhaps a more reliable way to ascertain the impact of a given book on a student is to have this chart serve as a check list for the teacher

⁴ *Literature as Exploration*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1938, p. 71.

⁵ "Two Basic Convictions about Teaching Literature," *The English Journal*, 49 (November, 1960), p. 534.

as each student makes oral responses. A third method would be to have students write open-end responses to pertinent questions, and then reveal themselves further through interviews with the teacher.

The teacher may wish to initiate analysis by having a few often taught selections examined to discover ways in which students respond to them. The best way to do this would be to use one of the methods already mentioned, immediately after the class has read one of the selections. A large number of selections could be examined at the end of a unit, at the end of a school year, or at the completion of high school.

Undoubtedly, individual differences will play a role in how students respond to selections. Therefore, students of varying ages, backgrounds, and abilities can be examined to determine whether certain responses are significant to certain groups. Through this study it can be determined how sex, ability, age, grade, and socio-economic background help to determine the student's response to literature. Certain youngsters might be studied at regular periods in their lives to determine if there is some pattern that the responses take in regard to age or grade.

From the analysis of the top ten books, it can be seen that certain books are significant for the same reason, *e.g.*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Of Human Bondage*, and *Look Homeward, Angel*. This knowledge of books can help the teacher guide the student in his selection of reading, whether he wishes to direct the student in search of similar reading or whether he wishes to make certain that the student does not always read the same types of books but widens his reading horizons.

Also, an analysis of the top books shows that certain books can be significant for many reasons, *e.g.*, *Crime and Punishment* and *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Knowing what selections have this wide range of significance for readers will help the teacher to select books which will have appeal to many students.

The real value of this study, however, lies in the teacher's adapting and adopting the procedure for classroom use. Then the implications of it are great for the teaching of a single selection, or for selecting significant material to teach, or for organizing the entire program. No matter what one's level or approach is, the results of such careful study of reading habits are valuable and important. Esther Raushenbush in her book *Literature for Individual Education* points out how an approach such as this one can be consistent even with the aims of the liberal arts institution at which she teaches:

We do not wish to discard as unimportant any of the creative thought that is our heritage from the past. What we do want to do is to introduce our students to this accumulated wisdom in ways and at times that will make it meaningful for them, not merely in some order that seems logical to us. We believe that to do this we must begin by giving them materials to work with that have some meaning for them now, whether we like these materials particularly ourselves or not; that we begin there to extend the borders of significance for them.*

* New York: Columbia University Press, 1942, p. 6.

Fiction Books Cited as Significant

The number within the parentheses after each title is the number of times that the book was cited as significant. If the book was cited only once, no number appears. Books with asterisks appearing before the title are available in paperbound editions.

- | | |
|--|---|
| * ADVISE AND CONSENT,
Drury (18) | * BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY,
THE, Wilder (6) |
| * ALEXANDRIA QUARTET,
Durrell (4) | * BRIDGE ON THE DRINA,
THE, Andric |
| * ALL THE KING'S MEN,
Warren (3) | * BROTHERS KARAMAZOV,
THE, Dostoevski (19) |
| * AMBASSADORS, THE, James | * BURNT-OUT CASE, THE
Greene |
| * AMERICAN TRAGEDY,
AN, Dreiser (2) | CAMILLE, Dumas |
| * ANATOMY OF A MURDER,
Traver | * CATCHER IN THE RYE,
THE, Salinger (39) |
| * ANDERSONVILLE,
Kantor (2) | * CITADEL, THE, Cronin (2) |
| * ANNA KARENINA,
Tolstoy (6) | COUNT OF MONTE
CRISTO, THE, Dumas |
| ANTHONY ADVERSE,
Allen (2) | * CRIME AND PUNISHMENT,
Dostoevski (27) |
| * ATLAS SHRUGGED, Rand
(21) | * CRY, THE BELOVED
COUNTRY, Paton (20) |
| * BABBITT, Lewis (3) | * DANDELION WINE,
Bradbury (2) |
| * BARABBAS, Lagerkvist | * DAVID COPPERFIELD,
Dickens (2) |
| * BEN-HUR, Wallace (4) | DEATH IN THE FAMILY, A,
Agee |
| * BRAVE NEW WORLD,
Huxley (17) | |

- * DEATH IN VENICE, Mann
- DOCTOR FAUSTUS, Mann
- * DR. ZHIVAGO, Pasternak (13)
- * DON QUIXOTE,
Cervantes (2)
- * DUBLINERS, THE, Joyce
- * EAST OF EDEN, Steinbeck (2)
- EAST RIVER, Asch
- * ETHAN FROME,
Wharton (2)
- * EUGÉNIE GRANDET, Balzac
- * EXODUS, Uris (30)
- * FALL, THE, Camus
- * FAREWELL TO ARMS, A,
Hemingway (2)
- * FATHERS AND SONS,
Turgenev
- FORSYTE SAGA, THE,
Galsworthy (6)
- FOR WHOM THE BELL
TOLLS, Hemingway (3)
- * FOUNTAINHEAD, THE,
Rand (13)
- FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE
APOCALYPSE, Ibañez
- * FRANKENSTEIN, Shelley
- * FRANNY AND ZOOEY,
Salinger (7)
- * FROM HERE TO
ETERNITY, Jones
- * GENERATION OF
VIPERS, Wylie (3)
- GIANTS IN THE EARTH,
Rolvaaag
- * GONE WITH THE WIND,
Mitchell (21)
- * GOOD EARTH, THE,
Buck (4)
- * GRAPES OF WRATH, THE,
Steinbeck (9)
- * GREAT EXPECTATIONS,
Dickens
- * GREAT GATSBY, THE,
Fitzgerald
- * GREEK PASSION, THE,
Kazantzakis (2)
- * GREEN MANSIONS,
Hudson (2)
- GREEN YEARS, THE, Cronin
- * HAWAII, Michener (4)
- * HEART IS A LONELY
HUNTER, THE, McCullers
- * HEART OF DARKNESS,
Conrad (3)
- * HORSE'S MOUTH, THE,
Cary
- HOUSE DIVIDED, Williams
- * HOUSE OF SEVEN
GABLES, THE, Hawthorne
- * HUCKLEBERRY FINN,
Twain (2)
- HUMAN COMEDY, THE,
Saroyan
- HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE
DAME, THE, Hugo (2)
- * IDIOT, THE, Dostoevski
- * INTRUDER IN THE DUST,
Faulkner
- * IVANHOE, Scott
- * JANE EYRE, Bronte (7)
- JOSEPH AND HIS
BROTHERS, Mann

- * KEYS OF THE KINGDOM, THE, Cronin
- * KINGSBLOOD ROYAL, Lewis (3)
- KRISTIN LAVRANSDAT-TER, Undset (4)
- * LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST, THE, Kazantzakis (2)
- LES MISÉRABLES, Hugo (8)
- * LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL, Wolfe
- * LORD JIM, Conrad (2)
- * LORD OF THE FLIES, Golding (10)
- * MADAME BOVARY, Flaubert
- MAGGIE NOW, Smith
- MAGIC MOUNTAIN, THE, Mann (5)
- * MARTIN EDEN, London (2)
- * MIRACLE OF THE BELLS, Janney
- * MR. BLUE, Connelly
- MR. BRITLING SEES IT THROUGH, Wells
- MRS. DOLLOWAY, Woolf
- * MOBY DICK, Melville (18)
- * MOUNTAIN ROAD, THE, White
- * MOUSE THAT ROARED, THE, Wibberley
- * MOVIEGOER, THE, Percy
- MYSTERIOUS STRANGER, THE, Twain
- * NATIVE SON, Wright
- * NECTAR IN A SIEVE, Markandaya
- NICHOLAS NICKLEBY, Dickens
- NINE TOMMORROWS, Asimov
- * 1984, Orwell (14)
- * NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND, Dostoevski
- * NUN'S STORY, THE, Hulme (3)
- * ODYSSEY: A MODERN SEQUEL, THE, Kazantzakis
- * OF HUMAN BONDAGE, Maugham (27)
- OF TIME AND THE RIVER, Wolfe (2)
- OLD MAN AND THE SEA, THE, Hemingway (5)
- * OLIVER WISWELL, Roberts
- * ONCE AND FUTURE KING, THE, White (3)
- * OTHER VOICES, OTHER ROOMS, Capote
- * OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET, Lewis
- * PEARL, THE, Steinbeck
- * PÈRE GORIOT, Balzac
- * PICKWICK PAPERS, Dickens
- PLAGUE, THE, Camus (2)
- * POINT COUNTER POINT, Huxley (2)
- * PORTRAIT OF A LADY, THE, James
- * PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

- AS A YOUNG MAN, A,
Joyce (8)
- * POSSESSED, THE,
Dostoevski
- * PRIDE AND PREJUDICE,
Austen (7)
- * RAINTREE COUNTY,
Lockridge (2)
- * RAZOR'S EDGE, THE,
Maugham (6)
- * REBECCA, Du Maurier
- * RED BADGE OF COURAGE,
THE, Crane (2)
- REMEMBRANCE OF
THINGS PAST, Proust
- * RETURN OF THE NATIVE,
THE, Hardy (13)
- * ROBE, THE, Douglas (3)
- * ROMANCE OF LEONARDO
DA VINCI, THE,
Merejkowski
- * ROMOLA, Eliot
- ROUND THE BEND, Shute
- * SCARLET LETTER, THE,
Hawthorne (4)
- * SECRET SHARER, THE,
Conrad (2)
- * SEVEN STOREY MOUN-
TAIN, THE, Merton (2)
- * SISTER CARRIE, Drieser
- * SONG OF BERNADETTE,
THE, Werfel
- * SOUND AND THE FURY,
THE, Faulkner (2)
- * STEPPENWOLF, Hesse (3)
- * STRANGE FRUIT, Smith
- * STRANGER, THE, Camus (2)
- * SUN ALSO RISES, THE,
Hemingway
- * SWORD IN THE STONE,
THE, White
- * TALE OF TWO CITIES, A,
Dickens (13)
- TALES OF SOLDIERS AND
CIVILIANS, Bierce
- * TESS OF THE D'URBER-
VILLES, Hardy (2)
- * TIME TO LOVE, A TIME TO
DIE, A, Remarque
- * TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD,
Lee (7)
- * TOM JONES, Fielding
- * TOO LATE THE
PHALAROPE, Paton (2)
- * TREE GROWS IN
BROOKLYN, A, Smith
- TRIAL, THE, Kafka (2)
- * UGLY AMERICAN, THE,
Burdick and Lederer (28)
- ULYSSES, Joyce (4)
- * VANITY FAIR, Thackeray (3)
- * WALL, THE, Hersey (4)
- * WAR AND PEACE, Tolstoy
(7)
- * WAY OF ALL FLESH, THE,
Butler
- WEB AND THE ROCK, THE,
Wolfe
- * WINTER OF OUR DISCON-
TENT, THE, Steinbeck (3)
- * WOMEN IN LOVE, Lawrence

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| * WUTHERING HEIGHTS,
Bronte (3) | YOUNGBLOOD HAWKE,
Wouk |
| YOU CAN'T GO HOME
AGAIN, Wolfe (6) | * YOUNG LIONS, THE, Shaw |
| | * YOUTH, Conrad |

**Drama, Poetry, Non-Fiction, and Miscellaneous Books
Cited as Significant**

- | | |
|--|---|
| * ABC OF READING, Pound | * BIBLE, THE (16) |
| * ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
Sandburg (2) | * BIG CHANGE, THE, Allen |
| ACTOR PREPARES, AN,
Stanislavski | BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS
WOLFE, THE, Nowell |
| * AENEID, THE, Virgil | * CANDIDE, Voltaire (2) |
| * ALICE IN WONDERLAND,
Carroll | CLASSICAL TRADITION IN
WESTERN LITERATURE,
Highet |
| * ALL MY SONS, Miller | * COLLECTED ESSAYS,
Huxley |
| * ANIMAL FARM, Orwell (8) | * COLLECTED LYRICS, Millay |
| * APPROACHES TO GOD,
Maritain | * COLLECTED POEMS,
Cummings |
| * ART OF LOVING, THE,
Fromm (2) | * COLLECTED POEMS,
Eliot (3) |
| * ASPECTS OF THE NOVEL,
Forster | COLLECTED POEMS,
MacLeish |
| AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF G. K.
CHESTERTON, Chesterton | COLLECTED POEMS,
Thomas |
| * AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN
STUART MILL, THE, Mill | COLLECTED POEMS AND
PLAYS OF
RABINDRANATH
TAGORE, Tagore |
| AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
LINCOLN STEFFENS,
THE, Steffens | * CRAFT OF FICTION, THE,
Lubbock |
| * AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ST.
THERESE | * CREATIVE INTUITION IN
ART AND POETRY,
Maritain |
| BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
Van Doren | CRISIS OF THE OLD
ORDER, THE, Schlesinger |
| * BEYOND TRAGEDY,
Niebuhr | |

- CRITIQUE OF PURE
REASON, Kant
- * CULTURED MAN, THE
Montague
- * CYRANO DE BERGERAC,
Rostand
- DAY ON FIRE, THE, Ullman
- * DEATH OF A SALESMAN,
THE, Miller
- DECLINE OF THE WEST,
THE, Spengler
- * DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA,
Tocqueville
- * DIALOGUES, Plato (4)
- * DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL,
THE, Frank (4)
- * EDUCATION OF HENRY
ADAMS, THE, Adams
- * ELEMENTS OF STYLE,
THE, Strunk and White (2)
- * EPIC OF GILGAMESH, THE
- * EXISTENTIALISM FROM
DOSTOEVSKY TO
SARTRE, Kaufmann
- * FAERIE QUEEN, THE,
Spencer
- * FAR SIDE OF PARADISE,
THE, Mizener
- * FAUST, Goethe
- * FEAR AND TREMBLING,
Kierkegaard
- * FLOWERING EARTH, THE,
Peattie
- * FOR 2¢ PLAIN, Golden
- * GANDHI READER, THE,
Jack
- * GIFT FROM THE SEA,
Lindbergh
- * GOLDEN BOUGH, THE,
Frazer
- * GULLIVER'S TRAVELS,
Swift (2)
- * HAMLET, Shakespeare
- * HIDDEN PERSUADERS,
THE, Packard
- * HIROSHIMA, Hersey
- * HOW TO READ A BOOK,
Adler
- HUMAN POTENTIALITIES,
Murphy
- * HUMAN SITUATION, THE,
Dixon
- * HUMAN USE OF HUMAN
BEINGS, THE, Weiner
- IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY,
THE, Newman
- IDYLLS OF THE KING,
Tennyson
- * ILIAD, THE, Homer
- * IMITATION OF CHRIST,
THE, Kempis
- * IMMENSE JOURNEY, THE,
Eiseley
- * IMPORTANCE OF
UNDERSTANDING, Yutang
- IN DEFENSE OF REASON,
Winters
- * INFERNO, THE, Dante
- * INTERPRETATION OF
CHRISTIAN ETHICS,
Neibuhr
- INTRODUCTION TO THE
DEVOUT LIFE, DeSales (2)
- J. B., MacLeish (3)
- JOHN BROWN'S BODY,
Benét (4)
- * KING LEAR, Shakespeare

- * LEAVES OF GRASS, THE,
Whitman
- * LITTLE PRINCE, THE,
Saint-Exupery
- * LONELY CROWD, THE
Riesman, Glazer and Reuel (2)
- * LONG DAY'S JOURNEY
INTO NIGHT, O'Neill
- * LOOK BACK IN ANGER,
Osborne
- * LORD OF THE RINGS,
Tolkien
- * MACBETH, Shakespeare (2)
- * MADAME CURIE, Curie
- * MAN CALLED PETER, A,
Marshall (2)
- * MAN'S EMERGING MIND,
Berrill
- * MATURE MIND, THE,
Overstreet
- * MEDITATIONS, Aurelius (2)
- * MEN'S UNCONQUERABLE
MIND, Highet
- * MERCHANT OF VENICE,
THE, Shakespeare
- * MERE CHRISTIANITY,
Lewis (2)
- * METAMORPHOSIS, Ovid
- * MIMESIS, Auerback
- * MY LIFE IN COURT, Nizer
- * MYTH OF SISYPHUS, THE,
Camus (2)
- * NATURE OF PREJUDICE,
THE, Allport
- * NATURE OF THE
UNIVERSE, THE, Hoyle
- * NEUROSIS AND HUMAN
GROWTH, Horney
- * ODYSSEY, THE, Homer (4)
- * OEDIPUS, THE KING,
Sophocles (2)
- * ONLY IN AMERICA, Golden
- * ON THE IMPROVEMENT
OF THE HUMAN
UNDERSTANDING, Spinoza
- * ORGANIZATION MAN, THE,
Whyte (2)
- * ORIGIN OF SPECIES, Darwin
- * ORTHODOXY, Chesterton (2)
- * OUR ORIENTAL HERITAGE,
Durant
- * OUR TOWN, Wilder
- * OUTLINE OF HISTORY,
THE, Wells
- * OUT OF MY LIFE AND
THOUGHT, Schweitzer
- * PARADISE LOST, Milton (2)
- * PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY,
THE, Huxley
- * PHILOSOPHY OF
SPINOZA, THE, Spinoza
- * PILGRIM'S PROGRESS,
Bunyan (6)
- * PLAYS, Eliot
- * PLAYS, Ibsen
- * PLAYS, Shakespeare (2)
- * PLAYS, Shaw
- * PLEASURES OF
PHILOSOPHY, THE, Durant
- * POEMS, Dickinson
- * POEMS, Goethe
- * POEMS, Heine
- * POEMS, Housman
- * POEMS OF GERARD M.
HOPKINS, Hopkins
- * POETICS, Aristotle

- POWERS OF POETRY, THE, Highet
- * PREFACE TO MORALS, Lippmann
- * PRINCE, THE, Machiavelli (2)
- * PROFILES IN COURAGE, Kennedy
- PROPHET, THE, Gibran (21)
- RADICAL INNOCENCE: THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN NOVEL, Hassan
- READER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA, Benét
- * RELATIVITY FOR THE LAYMAN, Coleman
- REMINISCENCES OF FELIX FRANKFURTER, Philips (recorded by)
- * RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY, Goldman
- * REPUBLIC, THE, Plato (4)
- RESISTANCE, REBELLION, AND DEATH, Camus
- ROYAL ROAD TO ADVENTURE, Halliburton
- * RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD REICH, THE, Shirer (2)
- * RUSSIA AND THE WEST UNDER LENIN AND STALIN, Kennan
- SAINT TERESA OF AVILA, Walsh
- SANE SOCIETY, THE, Fromm
- * SCREWTAPE LETTERS, THE, Lewis (2)
- * SEA AROUND US, THE, Carson
- * SELECTED POEMS, Patchen
- SHADOWS ON THE GRASS, Dinesen
- * STORY OF PHILOSOPHY, THE, Durant (2)
- * THREE WHO MADE A REVOLUTION, Wolfe
- * THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA, Nietzsche
- TWO PLAYS, Claudel
- TWO-THOUSAND TONGUES TO GO, Wallis and Bennett
- * TYRANNY OF WORDS, THE, Chase
- UNDERSTANDING POETRY, Brooks and Warren
- * USES OF THE PAST, THE, Muller
- * VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, THE, James
- * WALDEN, Thoreau (13)
- * WAY OF LIFE ACCORDING TO LAOTZU, THE, Laotzu
- WESTERN STAR, Benét
- * WHAT WE MUST KNOW ABOUT COMMUNISM, Overstreet
- WIND, SAND AND STARS, Saint Exupery (5)
- WISDOM OF AGES, THE, Freemantle
- WISDOM OF THE WEST, Russell (2)
- * WRITINGS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON, THE, Emerson (2)
- * ZEN BUDDHISM, Suzuki